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## VANCOUVER'S EARLIEST DAYS.\*

Vancouver, Canada's third largest city, was incorporated on April 6, 1886, but the foundations of its history go back at least a quarter of a century earlier. Nor is the story of these first days lacking in variety, for Greater Vancouver traces its origin not to a single settlement, but to several small communities that sprang up on the shores of Burrard Inlet in the sixties and seventies.

The city bears the name of the first British explorer of the vicinity. Captain George Vancouver, R.N., of H.M.S. *Discovery*, was the British official sent out under the terms of the Nootka Convention of 1790 between Spain and Great Britain ". . . to receive back, in form, a restitution of the territories on which the Spaniards had seized. . . ." <sup>1</sup> More important in the opinion of the navigator-explorer were the instructions to examine the coast from 30° to 60° north latitude; that is to say, from Lower California to southern Alaska. Vancouver did not discover the mouths of the Columbia, the Fraser, and the Skeena rivers, but his thorough charting of the coast laid to rest a ghost, the mythical Strait of Anian, which had haunted mariners for generations. Vancouver's own comment was:—

. . . I trust the precision with which the survey of the coast of North West America has been carried into effect, will remove every doubt, and set aside every opinion of a *north-west passage*, or any water communication navigable for shipping, existing between the North Pacific, and the interior of the American continent, within the limits of our researches. The discovery that no such communication does exist has been zealously pursued, and with a degree of minuteness far exceeding the letter of my commission or instructions; . . . <sup>2</sup>

At long last, the coast must attract attention for its own sake, and not as a possible channel permitting a short route from Europe to Asia.

Though maritime fur-traders thronged to the coast, and Fort Langley was built on the Fraser River for the Hudson's Bay Com-

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\* The presidential address delivered at the annual meeting of the British Columbia Historical Association, held in Victoria on January 18, 1946.

(1) Captain George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean* . . ., London, 1798, I., p. x.

(2) *Ibid.*, III., pp. 294-5.

*British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. X., No. II.

pany in 1827, it was not until the days of the gold-rush that any great attention was paid to what is now the site of the City of Vancouver. It was a coal deposit that first aroused serious interest in the Inlet. In June, 1859, Captain G. H. Richards, of H.M. Surveying Ship *Plumper*, which had been sent to examine the mouth of the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet, reported that members of his crew, under Mr. Brockton, had taken coal from seams on the south shore of the Inlet and that it had proved to be of good quality. Richards sent the cutter *Shark*, with 2 tons of the coal, to Governor Douglas in Victoria to substantiate his report. Later in the summer Walter Moberly and Robert Burnaby headed a party that set out from New Westminster to explore the coast and to examine the coal deposits. Word of Indian troubles reached the officials, and it was feared that the party would come to harm. The rumours proved false, but once more the *Plumper* visited the Inlet, and Moberly, years later, told of the pleasant party which followed her arrival. He wrote:—

They [the sailors] landed, as we had done, at the foot of what is now Bute street, and later brought a keg ashore. Then we lit a roaring fire of logs as night came on, and our party and the English sailors spent one of the jolliest nights I remember. Many rollicking old sea songs were sung and many a toast was drunk.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately the several seams which they found on the shore, both above and below high water, at "Coal Harbour," so named by Captain Richards, were all under a foot thick.

Interest in Burrard Inlet at that time was largely confined to its use as a defence for New Westminster, the capital of the mainland colony of British Columbia, and as a "backdoor" entrance and exit for that city when the Fraser River was frozen. In 1859 Colonel R. C. Moody planned a trail, to be cut by the Royal Engineers, from the capital to the anchorage at Port Moody, and another to be opened up by civilians to False Creek and along the shore to the English Bay anchorage. The first went straight north, and is now the North Road to Barnet. The second was to follow a route approximately the same as the present Douglas Road via Burnaby Lake.

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(3) Noel Robinson, *Blazing the Trail Through the Rockies: The Story of Walter Moberly and his Share in the Making of Vancouver* [Vancouver, 1916], p. 24.

In January, 1860, settlement on Burrard Inlet began, following Governor Douglas's proclamation of the first land laws of the colony. Robert Burnaby, Moody's secretary, filed the first known pre-emption claim on the site of the future city for a location, the present "West End," on the east side of the "Government Reserve," now Stanley Park. Included in the claim was District Lot 185, subsequently pre-empted by John Morton, Sam Brighthouse, and William Hailstone, and surveyed by the Royal Engineers in February and March, 1863, and by them marked "Brickmaker's Claim." In 1862 plans were laid for the erection of a sawmill on the north shore of the Inlet, but the Pioneer Mills did not actually start operations until the following June. In August, 1863, the steamer *Flying Dutchman* took the first cargo of 3-inch planking from Burrard Inlet for the New Westminster river levee. The first "foreign trade" lumber shipment was made in November, 1864, when the *Ellen Lewis* took a cargo from the Burrard Inlet mills to Adelaide, Australia.

The year 1865 marked the appearance of certain names which later became well-known. The clearing on the North Shore became Moody's Mill, later Moodyville, honouring Sewell Prescott Moody, who had acquired the Burrard Inlet mills in December, 1864. Oliver Hocking opened a stopping-place at the "End of the Road" from New Westminster. Captain Edward Stamp founded the British Columbia and Vancouver Island Spar, Lumber, and Sawmill Company, or, to give it the names by which it is better known, Stamp's Mill and, later, Hastings Mill, at the foot of the present Dunlevy Avenue. Jeremiah Rogers set up his famous "spar camp" at "Jerry's Cove," now Jericho, from which the Admiralty was supplied with spars. Rev. Ebenezer Robson held the first divine services for the mill-workers. Forty years later the pioneer missionary described his trip to Burrard Inlet in this manner:—

On Sunday, July 30th, 1865, after holding Class Meeting at 10 and preaching at 11 a.m. in New Westminster (where I then resided), I snatched a hasty lunch and mounting Wm. Grieves' clumsy cart horse, turned her nose toward the north for my first service on what is now the site of Vancouver city. The Scott road [meaning the Douglas Road, which had been built in part by "Colonel" J. T. Scott] from Columbia street, New Westminster, to the shore of Burrard Inlet at what is now called Hastings, was nine

miles less three chains in length. There was not much width to it, as it was but a roughly constructed trail. But the cart-horse was a good rougher. As my time was limited I could not afford to let him walk; trotting was hard on the rider and so I urged him to a lope with the result that he stumbled and went down with violence, head on, scraping a patch of skin off his brow and piling himself and rider in a heap in the dirt; then rolling over upon me, rubbed me in the mud. Objecting to that form of spreading the Gospel, I got from under and, righting myself and the bronco, climbed aboard once more and put him to his best trot. . . .<sup>4</sup>

Even after reaching Hastings a rough 3-mile trip had to be made in an Indian "dug-out" to Hastings Mill, where the service was held.

The text was I Tim. 4:8 "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of this world and of that which is to come," from which I tried to show the boys how to make the most of both worlds. I had a poor time of it . . . and I suspect the boys also had, for they gave me no collection, though the trip cost me three dollars in cash, besides some blisters and bruises.<sup>5</sup>

The year which marked the union of the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia—1866—also witnessed the end of Victoria's monopoly of pilotage on the Inlet. Until this time the sailing vessels seeking cargoes were dependent upon tugs from the Island. On July 28, 1866, the steamer *Isabel* was launched in Victoria for Stamp's mill. She was the "first owned by any sawmill on the mainland. . . . She was a side-wheel vessel, 146 feet long, 24 feet beam, and 9 feet hold. . . ."<sup>6</sup> An example of her services to the mill company and its customers

(4) Originally published in *Western Recorder*, May, 1905, republished in "Jubilee Glimpses of Our Church History," *Western Recorder*, Vancouver, July, 1936, pp. 3-4.

(5) *Ibid*, p. 4.

(6) F. W. Howay, "Early Shipping on Burrard Inlet," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, I. (1937), p. 10. These figures appeared in the account of the launch of this vessel in the *Victoria Colonist*, July 30, 1866. The *Register of Ships, Port of Victoria, 1867-1880*, in the Provincial Archives gives the following details: "Length from the forepart of the Stem under the Bowsprit to the aft side at the Head of the Sternpost 142 feet 4 tenths Main breadth to outside of Plank 22 feet 6 tenths Depth in Hold from Tonnage Deck to Ceiling at midships nine feet one tenth" and reports she was built "for transactions by the British Columbia and Vancouver Isld. Spar Lumber and Saw Mill Company Limited." An interesting incident relating to the activities of the *Isabel* is given in F. W. Howay, "The Case of the *Moneta*," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, V. (1941), pp. 185-90.



may be shown by reference to the barque *Jessie Stowe*, which was in port at Hastings Mill in October, 1871. Towage charges from Victoria to Burrard Inlet were \$180, and pilotage \$40. The outward trip, *en route* to Valparaiso with lumber valued at \$7,925, was made about two months later, and the charges were towage \$220 and pilotage \$65.

While Eastern Canada in 1867 was celebrating the achievement of Confederation, activity was growing on Burrard Inlet. In June, Stamp's Mill made its first cut, and the next month W. R. Lewis, a hotel proprietor of New Westminster, established a semi-weekly stage service to "Brighton," now Hastings, by way of Douglas Road, and in October a daily stage was instituted. The tiny steamer *Sea Foam* gave ferry service between Moodyville and Stamp's Mill. Her captain, James Van Brenner,<sup>7</sup> was engaged in marine business on the Fraser River in 1866. He subsequently purchased the steamer *Chinaman*, and then constructed the *Lillie*, using the machinery from the *Sea Foam*. In 1876 he built the *Leonora*, a 15-horse-power screw vessel, which, with the *Senator* built in 1880 and the tug *Skidegate*, became the nucleus of the Union Steamship fleet. The year 1867 also marked the arrival of that colourful character whose nickname of "Gassy Jack" caused a spot on Burrard Inlet to be called "Gastown," even on such official records as Admiralty Charts.

Captain John Deighton was born in Hull, Yorkshire, in 1830. According to his own story, "The November night when he was born it blew like — on the North Sea, and he caught enough wind to toot his own horn."<sup>8</sup> He was a sailor, who tried his fortune at gold-mining in both California and British Columbia. In the south he had a measure of luck in finding gold, but was not entirely successful in its disposal. In the Fraser River rush his ability at entertainment and as a river pilot far outweighed his success in securing nuggets. For a time he was associated with the Globe Saloon in New Westminster, but his claim to a place in Vancouver's history rests upon Deighton House. This

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(7) In records of the Hastings Mill the name is spelled "Vanbramer," and in the *Mercantile Navy List* it appears as "Braener."

(8) "Gasey [*sic*] Jack." The Eccentric Character who gave Granville the name of "Gastown." By an "Ancient Mariner," in *Vancouver News*, September 14, 15, 1886. Signed Whyawhy.

hotel, complete with saloon, stood at the junction of the present Water and Carrall streets, in a beautiful little Indian clearing known in the Squamish tongue as "Luck-lucky," i.e., "beautiful grove." Deighton is usually remembered as a rather blustering, kindly soul, who did his good deeds without thought of reward. On his death in June, 1875, the *Victoria Colonist* referred to him as "an energetic, useful, citizen."<sup>9</sup>

By 1868 the Burrard Inlet community had taken the form it was to maintain for some years. Its life centered around two sawmills, Moody's on the North Shore and Stamp's on the South, with Jerry Rogers sending spars from Jericho. In November the subdivision of Hastings, named after Captain (later Rear-Admiral) the Hon. George Fowler Hastings, C.B., commander of the North Pacific Squadron, was surveyed by B. W. Pearce. Actually, the location was not new, for it had been known at different periods of its history as "Hocking's," "Brighton," and "The End of the Road." Later still "Hastings," bestowed officially in 1869, was to give way to the less formal "Maxie's," after Maximilien Michaud, who conducted a hostelry, and who on May 15, 1869, was gazetted as postmaster at New Brighton.

The following year interesting events were of a different type, "more cultured" perhaps. Mount Herman Lodge, of the Masonic Order, was organized at Moody's Mills. A meeting room and library for mill employees was opened at Hastings Mill. At first this was known as the London Institute, but the name was soon changed to the Hastings Literary Institute. Telegraphic communication was established between Hastings and New Westminster, and Governor Musgrave visited Burrard Inlet.

March 1, 1870, witnessed the birth of "Granville." The town was surveyed, named after the Secretary of State for Colonies, and officially proclaimed to exist. Its approximate boundaries were Carrall Street, Cambie Street, Hastings Street, and the Inlet, although actually the modern Water Street marks what was then the shore-line. In April there was the first sale of town lots, with purchases being made by the "squatters"

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(9) *Victoria Colonist*, June 10, 1875. An obituary notice appeared in *New Westminster Mainland Guardian*, June 9, 1875. See also *ibid.*, June 12, 1875.

who were already occupying certain properties. Moodyville opened its first school in July, and began the seemingly incessant search for a teacher—incumbents soon forsaking the desk for the kitchen. In the same year the name "Hastings Mill" became official.

Once British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871, and construction of a railway to the Pacific was assured, the one question heard everywhere was "Where will the terminus be?" Actually there was little apparent change in the colony for some time. In 1872 there were three post-offices on Burrard Inlet—Hastings, Moodyville, and Hastings Mill. The mails were brought daily from New Westminster to Hastings by stage, and were taken by boat to the other two offices. Canadian postage came into general use, and the Canadian flag was raised over Deighton House on April 24. The first bridge was opened over False Creek, so that travellers on the False Creek Road to New Westminster and the new road down the southern slope to the North Arm of the Fraser no longer had to cross False Creek in a canoe and swim their horses. But George Black, the butcher who brought cattle to his slaughter-house on False Creek, still had to drive the animals through the water, as the bridge was not always secure enough for such traffic. On December 20, 1871, a start was made to organize a school district, and thanks to the energy of Captain Raymur a school-house was erected and classes were in operation by the end of February, 1872.

By 1873 the population of Granville was sixty-five, with many languages being spoken by the mill-workers. Indians employed at the mills lived at the rancherie, also known as "the Mission," in what is now North Vancouver. Rev. James Turner, the Methodist missionary whose field extended from the American border to the North Pole, and from the Coast to the Prairies, established his parsonage in Granville. Raymur continued his campaign to improve conditions in the town, and published a notice in the *Mainland Guardian* to the effect that he would oppose the granting of a licence to any Burrard Inlet houses open after 12 p.m., or where cards were played on Sunday.<sup>10</sup>

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(10) New Westminster *Mainland Guardian*, August 9, 1873. The advertisement was signed J. A. Raymur, J.P., C. M. Chambers, J.P., and J. Rogers, J.P.



The first steamer of which there is definite reference was built on the Inlet in 1873, for James A. Raymur. She was the *Maggie*, a wooden vessel, 72 feet long, 16 feet wide, and 4.5 feet depth. Her engines were 20 horse-power and her gross tonnage 72.<sup>11</sup> Less conventional, but nonetheless useful, was the creation known as the *Union*, or, more popularly, the *Sudden Jerk*. The craft was a square-built scow, powered by a threshing-engine, the side-wheels being connected by chain-gearing. Landings and departures were difficult, being manœvered by a pike-pole and a long sweep, as the engine was not provided with reverse gear. The *Union* had several well-known masters, among them George Marchant, George Odin, and Asbury Insley. Her last days were spent in the service of the Moodyville Mill Company, "who operated her until she became so tender that it was customary to put a stout chain around the engine and attach a line and buoy, so that it might be located if it should happen to drop through the bottom while making a trip."<sup>12</sup>

A second False Creek bridge was built because teredos had destroyed the first. Moody's steam mill was destroyed by fire in December, but reconstruction was speeded, and by May, 1874, operations were in full swing, and a night shift was working to make up for lost time.

These were dark days for the Inlet, as they were for the whole Province. The railway project was not popular in Ottawa, and British Columbia was decidedly "agin the government." In 1874 Joseph Mannion, soon nicknamed "the Mayor of Granville," opened the Granville Hotel. Visitors to the Inlet commented upon the activity of the mills and the fact that workmen of all nationalities were to be found there. However, Indian residents still formed such a large proportion of the community that visitors considered their headquarters worthy of description. One traveller remarked:—

The houses of the aborigines are the most complete 'whited sepulchres' one can imagine. The fronts, facing the harbour, are generally clean-looking

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(11) *The Mercantile Navy List and Maritime Directory for 1886*, London [1886], p. 115.

(12) E. W. Wright (ed.), *Lewis and Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest*, Portland, Oregon, 1895, p. 209.

and well whitewashed; but the backs, the sides, and the interiors are filthy beyond description.<sup>13</sup>

Travellers, however, failed to record the family life of the community. There was a growing settlement in which the comforts of life were not forgotten. The dignified ladies of Burrard Inlet were just as interested in fine clothes as their sisters anywhere in the world. Their cottage-style homes, consisting of parlour, dining-room, kitchen, and bedrooms, frequently contained furniture brought from England, and while Hastings Mill Store could provide practically everything needed from the cradle to the grave it was customary to buy "best clothes" in New Westminster or the capital city. There was no want of social activity. Parties were held in the reading-rooms and dramatics and musicals took place in the mill cook-house. Hospitality was freely given and strangers were well received. Ships visiting the Inlet reciprocated the kindness, and there were many happy dinners held aboard. On the occasion of the visit of the flagship of the Pacific Squadron in the 'seventies, a ball was held, to which the ladies of the Inlet and New Westminster were invited.

In 1875 both "Gassy Jack" and "Sue" Moody, two very different characters who figured so prominently in the early days on the Inlet, passed away. Deighton had returned to his "House" after spending some time piloting steamers on the Fraser River, and it was there that he died, but Moody was drowned in the sinking of the steamer *Pacific* off Cape Flattery. The first church was built by the Indians for the Methodists under the pastorate of Rev. Thomas Derrick, who had succeeded Rev. James Turner. The latter, because of his enormous field of operations, had been known as the "Minister of the Interior," and the new incumbent's name immediately suggested "Old Hoisting Gear" to the fun-loving populace of Granville. The church was erected through the combined efforts of representatives of many denominations on what is now Water Street, just east of Abbott. Steps led from the Indian Church, as it was known, down to the beach, where canoes could be tied to the steps during the service.

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(13) J. W. Boddam-Whetham, *Western Wanderings*, London, 1874, p. 300.

In 1877 the road between Granville and Hastings was completed and Lewis extended his stage route to Gastown.

The railway problem was still at a standstill, and cries of "secession" were heard in 1878. Prime Minister Mackenzie's statement of May 23, cancelling the selection of Esquimalt as a terminus and his choice of Burrard Inlet on July 12 did little to comfort Island residents. Probably Burrard Inlet inhabitants were not quite so glum, but even they welcomed the return of Sir John A. Macdonald to office, although he did hesitate for a time to confirm his predecessor's choice. *The Moodyville Tickler, the Pioneer Advocate of Burrard's Inlet*, made its appearance on July 20. Readers of this *Quarterly* probably recall the colourful stories of the lumber-clerk-editor and his jokes about obituary notices, with depth of black column dependent upon monetary considerations.<sup>14</sup>

In 1881 one of the best-known churches in Vancouver was opened—St. James Anglican—with Rev. George Ditcham as rector. In the same year Spratt's oilery made its appearance. Joseph Spratt, formerly of the Albion Iron Works in Victoria, acquired a small business which had been started by Andrew Rusta on the shore-line west of the present Marine Building. Herring were plentiful in the inlet, and a lucrative trade in salted fish and fish-oil was carried on.

In the next year, 1882, Morton and Brighthouse divided part of their land into town lots, and filed a ground plan of the "City of Liverpool" with the Registrar-General in Victoria. This city covered the area now bounded by Burrard and Nicola streets, between Coal Harbour and Georgia Street. The mills were still the most important factor in the life of the community, but other interests were beginning to creep in.

The year 1883 belongs to Port Moody. Steel rails arrived, and the first locomotive landed in October. Lots were offered at \$1,500 to \$2,000, and a newspaper, the *Port Moody Gazette*, was established. The paper was an offshoot of the New Westminster *Mainland Guardian*, but it boasted it would soon have an independent existence. The Admiralty made a final hydro-

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(14) See Bessie Lamb, "From 'Tickler' to 'Telegram'; Notes on Early Vancouver Newspapers," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, IX. (1945), pp. 175-199.

graphic survey of the Inlet, in preparation for the traffic which would follow the meeting of rail and sail.

The hey-day of Port Moody was short-lived, and with its decline fortunes, real and imaginary, took wing. While the official terminus remains to this day at Port Moody, Coal Harbour and English Bay were selected as the actual terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1884. The President of the railway, W. C. (later Sir William) Van Horne, was responsible for the changing of the name from "Granville" to "Vancouver." He desired a name which would have some meaning in all parts of the world, and stoutly defended his choice in the face of opposition from Vancouver Island, where it was felt confusion would result if city and island bore the same name. Some of the local residents shared this opinion. Years later R. H. Alexander, who in 1884 was manager of the Hastings Mill, recalled the circumstances in an address to the Vancouver Canadian Club:—

When the question first arose the old residents naturally thought the old name good enough, but Sir William Van Horne used all his influence with us for the name of Vancouver; but we said, "This is the Mainland; we don't want to be confounded with Vancouver Island." "Never mind," he said, "if you call it Granville or Liverpool, or any other name, it conveys no idea of location." Now people will remember that at school in their atlases they saw an island called Vancouver away up at the left-hand corner of North America, and though they may to some extent confound the city that is to be with the island, still it gives them a notion of whereabouts in the world it is, and so it was named Vancouver.<sup>15</sup>

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(15) R. H. Alexander, "Reminiscences of the Early Days of British Columbia," Canadian Club, Vancouver, *Addresses and Proceedings*, 1910-11, p. 16. The late L. A. Hamilton, who met Van Horne at Granville in 1884, recalled discussing the new name with him, and according to his recollection Van Horne expressed himself somewhat as follows: "Hamilton! This is destined to be a great city; perhaps the greatest in Canada. We must see to it that it has a name commensurate with its dignity and importance, and 'Vancouver' it shall be if I have the ultimate decision." See the letter from Hamilton to Major J. S. Matthews, Vancouver City Archivist, dated Kissimmee, Florida, April 30, 1934. One of the earliest appearances of the new name in print will be found in the September, 1884, issue of *The West Shore*, an illustrated journal then published in Portland, Oregon. A note in the *Montreal Star*, December 18, 1884, states: "The name of Vancouver has been chosen by Van Horne for the terminus of Coal Harbour on Burrard Inlet."

The new terminus did not achieve its importance without a struggle, but on Christmas Day, 1884, the first Canadian Pacific survey stake was driven in at the eastern boundary of Gastown. L. A. Hamilton, the railway's Land Commissioner, drove a stake where Hastings and Hamilton streets now meet, and used it as a departure post for his survey of the townsite.

The promise of the railway caused considerable activity in Granville. The number of buildings increased rapidly, and so did the aspirations of the inhabitants. The first newspaper, the *Vancouver Weekly Herald and North Pacific News*, appeared on Friday, January 15, 1886. In that issue there appeared the following notice:—

At a public meeting held here on Friday evening last a committee was appointed to draw up an act of incorporation for the City of Vancouver. The names are Messrs. Ferguson, Black, Hamilton, Miller, Blake and Johnston.

On February 15 a petition, signed by one hundred and twenty-five residents, was presented to the Provincial Legislature, praying for the incorporation of "the present village of Granville with its vicinity" as the "City of Vancouver."<sup>16</sup> It was the extension of the railway and the consequent increase in population which necessitated the construction of roads and wharves and increased facilities for the preservation of law and order. The Act of Incorporation received its third reading on April 2, and became law on April 6, 1886: the "village of Granville" officially became the "City of Vancouver."

Voting qualifications for civic elections were very vague. In a city where such a large proportion of the inhabitants were new arrivals it was always difficult to establish the residence qualification demanded of voters. For the elections for mayor and council on May 3, any man who had been resident in the city for two weeks was considered eligible.<sup>17</sup> This caused doubts later,

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(16) The original petition was presented to the City of Vancouver in an interesting ceremony held in the City Hall, March 13, 1944. Henry Blair, whose signature appears on the petition, is still resident in Vancouver (March 8, 1946).

(17) At least seven of those who voted at the first election are still alive: W. D. Haywood, V. Wallace Haywood, Calvert Simson, and James Myers resident in Vancouver; Chris. L. Behnson in North Vancouver; Henry J. Newton at Port Hammond; and Allan K. Stuart at Hope. (March 9, 1946.)



and there was an attempt to unseat the successful mayoralty candidate.

The first meeting of the City Council was held on May 10, and in his inaugural address Mayor M. A. MacLean outlined the business with which it had to deal. His speech, reprinted in the *Vancouver Advertiser*, expressed the views of the whole community:—

We commence to-day to organize rules, laws and regulations to lay the foundation of a city which is destined at no distant day to take a prominent place amongst the most progressive cities of Eastern Canada as well as those of the Western coast, and I venture to say that before many years will pass we will take our stand in the front for the province of British Columbia, and second only to San Francisco on the Pacific coast.<sup>18</sup>

He outlined the officers to be appointed, but there was one official for whom there was no immediate need. As for the City Treasurer, he said: "I don't see any particular hurry for this appointment, having no cash to deposit in his hands."<sup>19</sup>

The *Advertiser* kept its readers informed of local happenings. In the issue of May 11 it announced that the New Westminster & Burrard Inlet Telephone Company was erecting poles on different streets preparatory to placing instruments in the leading establishments. The first Presbyterian Church was opened for divine service on a Sabbath, May 16, and arrangements were made for a tea meeting and concert on the Monday—tea to be provided in the tent adjoining the church. The building was at the junction of a lane running between Cordova and Hastings streets, a half block west of Main Street. This congregation has been called "First," although Richmond—the "North Arm"—is regarded as the mother church of Presbyterianism in Vancouver, and the organization on the inlet was originally a mission under Richmond's direction. Later in May a meeting was held in the C.P.R. Hotel<sup>20</sup> to organize a Caledonian Club, but the "absence of certain important personages interested" caused the meeting to be adjourned to a later date.<sup>21</sup> On June 2 one

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(18) *Vancouver Advertiser*, May 11, 1886. This paper (the first daily on the mainland of British Columbia) made its initial appearance on May 8, 1886.

(19) *Ibid.*, May 11, 1886.

(20) The "C.P.R. Hotel" was owned by Macpherson, and is not to be confused with hotels erected by the railway company.

(21) *Vancouver Advertiser*, May 25, 1886.

of the landmarks of the community was enclosed with a picket fence—the maple tree which had stood in front of Deighton House.<sup>22</sup> According to the press, “The seat formerly located in the shade under the old landmark was becoming too popular with loafers.”<sup>23</sup>

There was a column in the *Advertiser* entitled “City News—Our Daily Local Grist of Interesting Items in and About Town.” The editor, W. B. Macdougall, son of the Hon. William Macdougall, had a happy faculty of combining weather reports, local doings, and subscription reminders with suggestions of where and how to spend one’s time. It was probably mere coincidence that following several rainy days, the Saturday edition contained these two lines, appearing consecutively:—

Weather sublime.

Go to church to-morrow.<sup>24</sup>

Our modern business managers would be inclined to regard such a note as this as free advertising:—

An Alexander Street butcher, with a basket full of choice steaks, etc., was thrown from his horse this morning, to the detriment of the meat and his own discomfiture.<sup>25</sup>

Treasurers who have difficulty with absent-minded members might try Macdougall’s method. He reminded his readers in a rather unusual manner that he wished his eight dollars subscription fee paid promptly:—

Pay up your subscriptions. We would sooner take a whipping than dun a man, but we don’t always wait to get our choice.<sup>26</sup>

Vancouver was well on its way. Plans were being made for a Dominion Day celebration, and clearing of lots went on steadily. Then, on Sunday, June 13, came the fire, which in a matter of minutes spread from a slash-pile on the Canadian Pacific town-site to Hastings Mill, and from the Inlet to False Creek. Physically, the new city was doomed, but the survivors settled down to a job not only of rebuilding but improving what they confidently believed was destined to be a great metropolis. Help

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(22) At this time the hostelry was owned by Harry Chase.

(23) *Vancouver Advertiser*, June 3, 1886.

(24) *Ibid.*, May 29, 1886.

(25) *Ibid.*, May 12, 1886.

(26) *Ibid.*, May 25, 1886.

came from many quarters, and homes and business buildings soon replaced those which had been destroyed.

Just six weeks after the fire, Stuart Cumberland, who was commissioned by a syndicate of Australasian, Indian, and English newspapers to give a description of the country, had this to say:—

I never saw such enterprise amidst so much desolation. . . . the air was thick with smoke, and hot with flames. . . . Everywhere I saw signs of enterprise. 'The old hath gone; let the new arise,' seemed to be the motto of the people, who, instead of falling into lethargy or bemoaning their fate, were one and all bestirring themselves with an energy and a spirit that was little short of heroic.<sup>27</sup>

Mayor MacLean seemed tireless. He was a veritable "Pooh Bah," but every office entailed hard work, and, apart from the position of chief magistrate, none of them carried any remuneration. This was the period of the "tents." The picture of the City Fathers grouped before the improvised City Hall is well known, but the activities carried on in the tent Court-house seem to have attracted less notice. Cumberland has this to say of the law-abiding qualities of the community:—

Considering the disorder, want, and despair consequent upon the conflagration, there was very little to complain of on the score of lawlessness, offences against the majesty of the law being almost entirely confined to petty larcenies.<sup>28</sup>

The great majority of those who came to the city were adventurous young people anxious to succeed, but there were the occasional visitors who preferred to take life easy. Readers of Ernest Walter's column, "Before the Magistrate," in the *Vancouver Province* will appreciate the method of dealing with habitual loafers. A visitor asked the authorities why such an one would work for sixty days for the municipality when there were plenty of jobs available at a dollar a day. The answer was:—

"You see, whilst he is in our charge he will be well fed and housed, and when his time is up we shall give him a suit of clothes, a flannel shirt, and may be a few dollars, and march him out of the town—for we don't want any such 'dead-beats' hanging about here for ever. The fellow just figures all this out, and, by the time he has done, he reckons the deal is

(27) Stuart Cumberland, *The Queen's Highway From Ocean to Ocean*, London, 1887, pp. 51-2.

(28) *Ibid.*, p. 57.

about square, and after a few weeks' loafing he gives another municipality the benefit of his company."<sup>29</sup>

It must have been a welcome change for a slow-moving individual who found himself in all the hustle and bustle of a city which seemed determined to grow up all at once.

George H. Ham, special correspondent of the Winnipeg *Manitoban*, visited the city early in July, and his letters, reprinted in the *Vancouver News*, July 27, 1886, should surely have satisfied the most ambitious resident of the terminal city. He suggested that the magic of the city's rebirth rivalled the achievements of Aladdin. His report summarized the activities of six months in this manner:—

In February last there were only a few scattered houses on the site of Vancouver; in April there were a hundred, at the end of May this had increased to between five and six hundred; on the night of the 13th June, a bare dozen marked the spot where that morning a prosperous city existed. That is the story of the rise and fall of Vancouver. Ever onward, ever upward, this Chicago of the coast, this Winnipeg of the west, must eventually take her place amongst the great cities of the world.<sup>30</sup>

Vancouver would certainly have been a queer looking place or one of the wonders of the world, if it had resembled every place to which it was compared.

One of the old landmarks came in for critical comment during 1886. The fish-supply in the Inlet had declined, and supplies were brought in by scow to Spratt's wharf for the manufacture of fertilizer. Neighbours protested that the health of citizens was endangered because the cargo was not promptly disposed of. The editor of the *News* left nothing to the imagination when he wrote:—

At present the smell reminds one of a glue factory, and we should think in a fortnight the odor will be strong enough to stop every clock in town.<sup>31</sup>

Fire solved the problem, for the oil-refinery was burned out on August 11.

The shortage of small change created a real problem. "Old inhabitants" were satisfied with "bits,"<sup>32</sup> but newcomers,

(29) *Ibid.*, p. 62.

(30) Letter dated July 10, 1886, in *Vancouver News*, July 27, 1886.

(31) *Ibid.*, August 4, 1886.

(32) For a discussion of the subject, readers are referred to Robie L. Reid, "Why 'Bits'?" *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, IV. (1940), pp. 21-28.

particularly those from eastern Canada, were accustomed to small coins. The newspapers were 5 cents each—if one had the change, and judging from comments, the newsboys frequently contrived to receive a much larger amount. It was competition created by a saloon offering 5-cent beer that really brought the problem to a head. A New Westminster saloon keeper sent to Winnipeg and had \$100 in 5-cent pieces shipped out at a cost of \$1.80. A Vancouver storekeeper had \$10 in the nickel coin brought from Washington Territory, and paid the captain of a Seattle steamer \$1 for the service.<sup>33</sup>

The London *Times* correspondent who visited the city in September estimated that the population was 1,500, and reported that the city seemed to be composed largely of hotels and real-estate offices. Timber stands attracted him, and provided him with a basis of comparison. The Chief of Police, James M. Stewart, was described as a "Highland-man of massive build, constructed to rival the big trees of this region," and the ambition of the "Terminal City" was "as big as her trees."<sup>34</sup>

On Sunday, July 4, 1886, the first Canadian Pacific trans-continental passenger train arrived at Port Moody. To celebrate the event, excursions were run from Victoria, Nanaimo, and New Westminster to Port Moody. Mayor MacLean, of Vancouver, presented an address of welcome, but in spite of the rejoicing there was one question uppermost in the minds of the citizens whom he represented: "How soon will Port Moody give up the struggle, and let the line be continued to its logical terminus?" Even with the general optimism of the period, the first regular issue of the *Vancouver News* to appear after the fire, made this comment:—

. . . . Vancouver has shown to the world its strength and its resources; but the magnitude of them will not be thoroughly grasped until we hear the echo of the locomotive's shriek reverberating through the near-by mountains, and enjoy the grand sight of the greatest railway of the world reaching this city.<sup>35</sup>

The decision of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, July 23, 1886, that the Canadian Pacific must be allowed its right-of-

(33) See *Vancouver News*, August 6, 1886.

(34) *A Canadian Tour: a Reprint of Letters from the Special Correspondent of the Times*, London, 1886, p. 44.

(35) *Vancouver News*, July 23, 1886.



way from Port Moody to Vancouver, was not considered final, and the case was carried to a higher court. Port Moody was the terminus of the barque *W. B. Flint*, which the railroad company had chartered to bring tea and Oriental goods for shipment east over the new railway. The cargo reached the eastern coast and England in record time, and was the beginning of the service which advertised that the Canadian Pacific "spans the world."

Considerable delay was caused by the persistency of investors who had gambled on Port Moody for the terminus. The case was carried to the Supreme Court of Canada, and the delays so exasperated Van Horne that he finally declared he would bring the train to Vancouver, even if he had to make a way around the intervening property by building a trestle. It would have been only 2½ miles long! It was really just a question of time before some provision would be made, because speed in handling the shipments from the Orient demanded less waste of time in Burrard Inlet.

Meanwhile the young city continued to expand. Property was increasing in value, the civic services were becoming established, the policemen—four of them—had badges, school accommodation was being enlarged, but then, as now, never quite seemed to meet the demands made upon it.

Before the injunction was formally lifted, the Canadian Pacific Railway had practically completed construction of track into the city. Work was speeded, and on May 23, 1887, the first train, drawn by the now famous engine 374, pulled into Vancouver. It was an historic day. Train schedules had appeared in the newspapers for several days previously, but the headline of May 24 summarizes the popular view on the subject:—

Regular Train Service Adopted—Advent of Prosperity.<sup>36</sup>

The coming of the railway really did inaugurate a period of development for Vancouver. In 1887 a Board of Trade was organized with David Oppenheimer, who had succeeded M. A. MacLean as Mayor, as president. There was a real-estate board, and branches of various national societies and athletic clubs had been established. By 1888 business property was selling at from \$100 to \$200 per foot of frontage; there were 20 miles of graded streets, of which 5½ miles were planked, and 1 mile gravelled;

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(36) *Vancouver News-Advertiser*, May 24, 1887.

there were 9 miles of sidewalk. Both gas and electricity were used for illumination, and there were four banks, three newspapers, and a reading-room to minister to the needs of the community.

Visitors to the city during the early years had many comments, both laudatory and critical, to make on the conditions which they found. One writer—possibly rather prejudiced because of the trade which he hoped would follow his comment—declared that the Hotel Vancouver was a magnificent structure, elegantly furnished throughout, and rivalled the large hotels of San Francisco. Then he added:—

There are other fine hotels in the city—in fact, no place is better supplied with them.<sup>37</sup>

Unfortunately for Vancouver's reputation as a tourist centre, not all visitors were so favourably impressed. Perhaps one's background coloured the glasses through which one viewed the picture, and those of some English travellers must have been deep blue. Edward Roper, a number of whose original water-colours are preserved in the Vancouver Public Library, described the city's rapid recovery after the fire:—

Wharves, docks, warehouses, foundries, factories, public institutions, had been built, and first-rate stores, many hotels. . . .<sup>38</sup>

He considered the hotels very far from "first rate," and although his descriptions were not complimentary, they are amusing to those who are accustomed to the habits of a pioneering community. A conversation with a hotel clerk ran something like this:—

We said, "What do you do about blacking boots here?"

He looked at us pityingly, then he replied slowly, "Gentlemen, Mrs. Black (the proprietress) she allows to make this yer bizness pay, she does, and she calkerlates to have a heap of towerists stay here right along, when the China ships is in, and when the people from the East and Eurrop gets to taking a tower by this rout; an' she ses she's bound to do all she can to make things pleasant. But, gentlemen, it's no use talkin', we ain't got no man low enough down in this yer city to black nò man's boots; guess it ain't to be done nohow."<sup>39</sup>

(37) *The New West*, Winnipeg, 1888, p. 177.

(38) Edward Roper, *By Track and Trail; A Journey through Canada*, London, 1891, p. 292.

(39) *Ibid.*, pp. 186-7.

Of his party's departure from the establishment, Roper wrote:—

We *could* not much regret the Le Grand House, the manager of which did not even shake hands all round at parting. Mrs. Black, the proprietess [*sic*], did not speak one word to any of us during all our stay. We paid our bills and left; no one but the Scotch bar-tender having the decency to offer to help us get our trunks down from our rooms. *He* kindly gave a hand. . . .<sup>40</sup>

Added to the neglect with which travellers were treated was the great familiarity with which they were prevailed upon to part with their clothes which attracted hotel employees. The manager of one hotel finally persuaded a guest to sell him a coat for \$25, the whole suit having been purchased for less than half the price a considerable time previously. Service may have left much to be desired, but Vancouver hotelmen wanted to be in style!

Not all visitors were so critical. There was much in the young city to admire, and Douglas Sladen has left a fitting description of the terminal city as he found it in 1889:—

Vancouver in 1889 presented curious contrasts. Take Granville Street, for instance, in which we were living. One end led to the docks, with 3,000-ton steamers lying in them, and the terminus of a transcontinental railway; the other left you at the end of a bridge which led to the forest, and, after miles of mud, to New Westminster. . . . The extraordinary thing about Vancouver is that in the midst of all this wildness it is so absolutely modern; no one would think of putting up a house without a telephone and electric light.<sup>41</sup>

The population at the time of Roper's visit was 6,085.<sup>42</sup> On January 1, 1886, it had been 600, a year later 2,000. The official census for 1891 was 13,709. This was still a far cry from the 1945 estimate of 311,799, but nonetheless Vancouver was on its way!

HELEN R. BOUTILIER.

VANCOUVER, B.C.

(40) *Ibid.*, p. 294.

(41) Douglas Sladen, *On the Cars and Off*, London, 1895, pp. 369-71.

(42) Henderson's *British Columbia Gazetteer & Directory* . . . for the Year 1889 [Victoria, 1889], p. 353.

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